

**Abionic wins the ‘Prix Debiopharm Valais pour les Sciences de la Vie’  
for its innovative biomedical device for diagnostic testing**

**Lausanne, Switzerland, November 23, 2010** - Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm), an independent specialist in global bio-pharmaceutical development in the field of oncology and regarding certain serious diseases, has announced the winner of the *Prix Debiopharm Valais pour les Sciences de la Vie* (Debiopharm Valais Life Sciences Prize). This year, Abionic S.A., represented by its founder and executive director Dr Nicolas Durand, won the prize for a new diagnostic platform, the abioDISC, which measures patients’ allergy profiles rapidly, simply and economically. The abioDISC is used in conjunction with an abioSCOPE reader, connected to the doctor’s computer via a simple USB connection. Using it couldn’t be simpler: a small drop of blood is taken from the patient’s fingertip using a lancing device. The blood is diluted, placed into one of the recesses of the abioDISC, and then analysed via the abioSCOPE. The computer displays the patient’s allergy profile, enabling the doctor to interpret the results and prescribe the most suitable medicine.

The jury’s attention was caught by Abionic S.A.’s innovative, simple, efficient, reliable and economic technology.

On 23 November, an amount of 20,000 Swiss Francs was awarded to Abionic S.A. during a ceremony which took place at The Ark Foundation in Monthey.

“Abionic fits in perfectly with Debiopharm’s philosophy”, declared Bertrand Ducrey, CEO of Debio R.P. “The diagnostic platform developed by Abionic is entirely consistent with the principles of responsible medicine for tomorrow’s world, as advocated by Debiopharm – these principles give rise to the need for technologies which are both innovative and financially accessible.”

“Abionic S.A. is very proud to have been selected by the jury for the 2010 *Prix Debiopharm Valais*”, remarked Dr Nicolas Durand, who added that “the Abionic team sees the prize not simply as a reward, but rather as an incentive to continue working hard towards the development and running of efficient and economic systems.”

Dr Jean-Claude Villettaz (R&D Director at HEVs and Vice-Chairman of The Ark Foundation) considers that “the work carried out by Abionic, and justly rewarded by the Debiopharm prize, reflects the calibre of entrepreneurs operating in the French-speaking region of Switzerland in the life-sciences field,” and added that he “looks forward to the time when Abionic’s innovations enable better diagnosis of allergies and thus more effective treatment.”

**About the Prize**

Awarded for the first time in 2008, the Prize rewards students, researchers or enterprises (start-ups, SMEs) that undertake a research project leading to an innovation usable in the field of life sciences and technologies. Ideally, the innovation must be close to the stage where it could be marketed and take the form of a product, a technological advance or an innovative service.

The innovative advance, or its scientific and economic consequences, must have a direct link with the Valais. The event is organised by The Ark Foundation, in partnership with BioAlps, Swiss Biotech Association, and the “Haute Ecole Spécialisée de Suisse occidentale”.

### **About Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm)**

Debiopharm specialises in biopharmaceutical product development. It acquires licences for biological products and molecules having a worthwhile medicinal potential. Debiopharm develops its products with a view to worldwide registration and grants licences to pharmaceutical partners who are in charge of the marketing and sales activities. It independently finances all its activities in the world, and it provides expertise in the fields of pre-clinical, clinical, manufacturing, galenic, formulation of medicines and regulatory matters.

Founded in 1979 and based in Lausanne, Switzerland, Debiopharm has developed five products which are currently marketed worldwide.

Debio Recherche Pharmaceutique (R.P.), based in Martigny, is a company involved in pharmaceutical research, development and production, inspected by SwissMedic and the US regulatory authorities (FDA). Each year, 300,000 people across the globe are treated with products developed and produced in Martigny, with a 95% rate of positive results from the treatment. Debio R.P. belongs to Debiopharm Group™ and employs 130 people, nearly half of whom are university academics and engineers.

For more information about Debiopharm Group™, please visit: [www.debiopharm.com](http://www.debiopharm.com).

### **About The Ark Foundation**

The Ark Foundation promotes innovation within the Valais economy, concentrating on three areas: IT and communications sciences, life sciences and engineering sciences.

The aim of The Ark is to build tomorrow's technology in the Valais. To achieve this aim, it offers tailored services helping to strengthen the competitiveness of Valais companies and pooling the canton's renowned skills.

This strategy is implemented at six technological sites: BioArk Monthey, IdeArk Martigny, PhytoArk Sion, TechnoArk Sierre, BlueArk Viège and TeleArk Brigue.

For more information, please visit: [www.theark.ch](http://www.theark.ch).

### **About BioArk**

BioArk is a technological site dedicated to life sciences. It is located at the heart of the chemical industrial zone in Monthey, and is a centre of technological expertise offering high-quality infrastructure and an environment conducive to the development of companies active in the life-sciences field.

The site comprises an area of 2,500 m<sup>2</sup> spread over three floors, and units with offices and laboratory equipment enabling the creation of life-size, pre-marketing models of biotechnological projects. BioArk helps enterprises and start-up companies established on the site to tap into this rich vein of knowledge and know-how among research institutes, educational establishments and industrial operators. Currently, it hosts seven companies working in the field of life sciences and technologies.

For more information, please visit: [www.bioark.ch](http://www.bioark.ch).

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